

Poetry Vocabulary

poetry on the page

epigraph – quote at beginning of book/chapter/poem from another author offering theme or inspiration

stanza – form of paragraphing in poetry to separate sections with blank line

caesura – pause or break within a line of poetry through punctuation

enjambement – meaning of line wraps from one line to next without punctuation

end stop – meaning reaches completion at the end of line with punctuation

poetic language

diction – author's word choice

denotation – basic definition or dictionary meaning of a word

connotation – associations a word suggests beyond its basic definition

tone – writer or speaker's attitude toward subject

syntax – arrangement of words within a sentence

anaphora – same expression repeated at beginning of two or more lines

types

ode – poem in praise or celebration of its subject

allusion poem – poem referencing historical or literary figure, event, or object

free verse – poem with varying line length, lack of traditional meter, non-rhyming lines

blank verse – unrhymed iambic pentameter

couplet – two successive lines, usually in same meter, that rhyme

heroic couplet – iambic pentameter lines rhymed in pairs

sonnet – fourteen-line poem following one of two rhyme schemes (Shakespearean or Italian)

villanelle – nineteen-line poem with only two rhyme sounds, lines 1 and 3 repeat according to a set pattern.

sestina – blank verse with six six-line stanzas each and one three-line stanza at the end; final words of each line in first stanza are repeated in variable order in subsequent stanzas

pantoum – any number of four line stanzas, where L2 and L4 of first stanza become L1 and L3 of next stanza. Ends with original L1 and L3 in reverse order, L1 as the last line of the poem.

terza rima – three-lined stanzas with rhyme scheme *aba bcb cdc ded* and so forth

sound

euphony – pleasing sounds

cacophony – unpleasant sounds

meter – regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables

poetic foot – unit of measurement with one stress and either one or two unstressed syllables

iambic pentameter – five ‘feet’ of one unaccented syllable followed by one accented syllable

rhyme scheme – pattern in which rhyme sounds occur

slant rhyme – approximate rhyme

internal rhyme – rhyme involving words not confined to the end of the line

alliteration – repetition at close intervals of consonant sounds

consonance – repetition of a pair of consonants with changes in the middle vowels (ex. ‘reader’ and ‘rider’)

onomatopoeia – use of words that mimic their meaning through their sound

figurative language

simile – comparison between two unlike objects using ‘like’ or ‘as’

metaphor – direct comparison between two unlike objects

extended simile/metaphor – simile/metaphor that functions as controlling image of whole work

personification – giving animals, ideas, abstractions, and inanimate objects human form or personality

idiom – a fixed, often colorful, expression whose meaning cannot be understood from the individual words

hyperbole – extravagant exaggeration for effect

oxymoron – self-contradictory combination of words

apostrophe – an absent person or personified object is addressed by a speaker